

REMARKS

This application has been carefully reviewed in light of the Office Action dated December 7, 2007. Claims 1 to 4, 6 to 63, 65 to 71, 73 and 74 are pending in the application, with Claims 5, 64 and 72 having been cancelled, and Claims 73 and 74 having been newly-added. Claims 36 to 63 and 65 to 71 have been withdrawn from consideration. Claims 1 to 4 and 6 to 35 have been amended. Of the claims presented for examination, Claims 1, 16, 17, 22, 26, 73 and 74 are in independent form. Reconsideration and further examination are respectfully requested.

Applicants thank the Examiner for the indication that Claims 5, 16, 17, 22 and 26 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form, including all of the limitations of the base claims.

In keeping with the indication of allowable subject matter in Claim 5, Applicants have amended independent Claim 1 to include the substance of Claim 5, which has consequently been cancelled. Newly-added Claims 73 and 74 are respectively directed to a method and program which generally correspond with Claim 1.

Furthermore, in keeping with the indication of allowable subject matter in Claims 16, 17, 22 and 26, Applicants have rewritten Claims 16, 17, 22 and 26 into independent form and to include the substance of their respective base claims. Consequently, independent Claims 1, 16, 17, 22, 26, 73 and 74, together with their dependent claims, are seen to be in condition for allowance.

Claims 1 to 35 and 72 were objected to based on alleged informalities. The amendments to the claims are seen to attend to this objection. Reconsideration and withdrawal are therefore respectfully requested.

Claim 64 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 101 for allegedly being directed to non-statutory subject matter. Claim 64 has been cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer of subject matter, and without conceding correctness of the rejection. Thus, this rejection is seen to be obviated.

Claims 1 to 4, 9, 12, 14, 15, 29 to 33, 64 and 72 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, for alleged indefiniteness. This rejection is respectfully traversed with reference to Claims 31 and 32, since the description of “sub-items” in at least pages 67 to 72 of the specification is seen to provide clarification for the term “subsidiary items”, as recited in these claims. The amendments to other rejected claims are seen to attend to the § 112 rejection. Reconsideration and withdrawal for these claims are therefore respectfully requested.

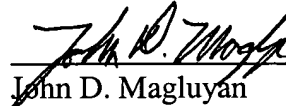
Claims 1 to 4, 7 to 13 and 72 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) over U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2003/0028558 (Kawatani); Claim 64 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) over U.S. Patent No. 6,594,658 (Woods); Claims 6, 14 and 15 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over Kawatani in view of U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2002/0174101 (Fernley); Claims 18 to 21, 23 to 25, 27 to 29 and 33 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over Kawatani in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,789,230 (Katariya); Claims 30 to 32 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over Kawatani in view of Katariya and further in view of Woods; and Claims 34 and 35 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over Kawatani in view of Katariya and further in view of U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2003/0069877 (Grefenstette). Claims 5, 64 and 72 have been cancelled, and Claims 1 to 4 and 6 to 35 have been amended as noted above. The foregoing actions have been taken without prejudice or disclaimer of subject matter, and

without conceding the correctness of the rejections, but rather strictly to obtain an earlier allowance.

No other matters being raised, it is believed that the entire application is fully in condition for allowance, and such action is courteously solicited.

Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached in our Costa Mesa, California office at (714) 540-8700. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below-listed address.

Respectfully submitted,



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